



Advocating for Licensure at the Receipt of the Doctoral Degree

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8:00AM - 9:50AM

Morial Convention Center, Rooms 343 and 344

Postdoctoral requirements for licensure present significant barriers for those seeking to enter the profession of psychology. Many students today are able to obtain more than two years of quality supervised experience prior to graduation, rendering the postdoctoral year obsolete and unnecessarily burdensome, particularly in light of the profession's inability to establish a sufficient number of standardized and appropriately funded postdoctoral training experiences. This symposium will review recent activities by the APA and state psychological associations to permit the two years of supervised experience for licensure to be completed pre or postdoctorally, thus allowing students who are able to obtain appropriate supervised experience during graduate school to be licensed upon receipt of the doctoral degree.

Participants will gain the necessary skill sets and knowledge to advocate for updating licensure requirements within their state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations (SPTPA) and to navigate the political and policy challenges to updating licensure laws and regulations within their local jurisdictions. Participants will gain a sophisticated understanding of advocacy and policy development at the local and national level, as well as an appreciation of the distinction between statutory and regulatory laws. Students and early career psychologists (ECPs) in particular will gain valuable insight and recommendations on how to become actively engaged in the legislative and policy activities of psychological associations, government, and other health professions. Resources will be provided to assist SPTPA leaders in advancing this issue.

Chair

Christopher W. Loftis, PhD

Moving Forward: Overcoming Unnecessary Barriers to Licensure

Thomas J. De Maio, PhD

Ruth Ullmann Paige, PhD

Initiating a Statewide Advocacy Effort to Update Licensure Requirements

Jeffrey E. Barnett, PsyD

Developing a Legislative and Political Strategy to Pass Licensure Laws

Michael O. Ranney, MPA

So You Passed a New Licensure Law: Now What?

G. Andrew H. Benjamin, PhD, JD

Discussant

Michael B. Madson, PhD

Advocating for Licensure at the Receipt of the Doctoral Degree

Postdoctoral requirements for licensure present significant barriers for those seeking to enter the profession of psychology. At present, applicants for licensure must obtain two-years of supervised clinical experience, one of which must be post-doctoral. Doctoral training has evolved considerably since the postdoctoral requirement was first recommended 40 years ago when there was a relative lack of supervised clinical experience prior to internship. Many students today are able to obtain more than two years of quality supervised experience prior to graduation, rendering the postdoctoral year obsolete and unnecessarily burdensome, particularly in light of the profession's inability to establish a sufficient number of standardized and appropriately funded postdoctoral training experiences.

This symposium will review recent activities by the APA and state psychological associations to permit the two years of supervised experience for licensure to be completed pre or postdoctorally, thus allowing students who are able to obtain appropriate supervised experience during graduate school to be licensed upon receipt of the doctoral degree. Participants will gain the necessary skill sets and knowledge to advocate for updating licensure requirements within their state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations (SPTPA) and to navigate the political and policy challenges to updating licensure laws and regulations within their local jurisdictions. Panelists will include visionary leaders from three states (Washington, Maryland, and Ohio) who will share lessons learned and strategies for changing licensing laws and regulations. Through this program, participants will gain a sophisticated understanding of advocacy and policy development at the local and national level, as well as an appreciation of the distinction between statutory and regulatory laws. Students and early career psychologists (ECPs) in particular will gain valuable insight and recommendations on how to become actively engaged in the legislative and policy activities of psychological associations, government, and other health professions. Resources will be provided to assist SPTPA leaders in advancing this issue.

(1) Moving Forward: Overcoming Unnecessary Barriers to Licensure

Working to change the sequence of supervision requirements for licensure requires a solid rationale for the change, and there are several. Drs. Ruth Ullmann Paige and Tom DeMaio will briefly review the establishment of the APA Board of Directors Working Group and the reasoning behind the recommendation for the policy change. The discussants will review the context for the change, including the impact on students, early career psychologists, and on practice, education, training, and the public. Issues related to doctoral education and licensure mobility will also be discussed.

(2) Initiating a Statewide Advocacy Effort to Update Licensure Requirements

There are many reasons why the postdoctoral requirement for licensure is archaic, inappropriate, and not in the best interest of the profession of psychology and those we serve. The steps taken by the Maryland Psychological Association (MPA) are reviewed in detail to include the process of addressing the issue, educating the leaders of MPA, building a consensus on the issue, developing support among the membership of the association, educating members, the public, legislators, and the Board of Examiners of Psychologists, and then moving forward to work toward regulatory and legislative change to remedy this inappropriate obstacle for entry into the profession of psychology. Lessons learned thus far and their implications for other SPTPAs and their leaders are shared.

(3) Developing a Legislative and Political Strategy to Pass Licensure Laws

Ohio students and early career psychologists identified the post-doc requirement as a critical issue that needed to be addressed by the Ohio Psychological Association (OPA). Ohio has no APA accredited post-doc sites and those that exist vary widely in quality and training value. Over the last year the OPA Board has studied this issue, aided by material prepared by the APA Workgroup on Education and Training Leading to Licensure. OPA identified the steps necessary to change the sequence of training, maintaining the level of training at two years of supervised clinical experience, while eliminating the requirement for one year of post-doctoral supervision. OPA has developed legislation, reached out to potential opponents, reached out to members to explain the rationale for this change, and has begun to work through the legislative process. Many of the aspects of the strategy will be shared, along with an assessment of how well they have worked to aide SPTA's and their leaders who are contemplating similar efforts.

(4) So You Passed a New Licensure Law - Now What?

In June 2004, Washington became the first state in the nation to eliminate the postdoctoral requirement for licensure. The Washington Psychological Association supported this grassroots effort as part of larger bill designed to reduce entry barriers in several health-care fields. Over the past year, the Association has worked closely with the Washington State Examining Board of Psychology to develop new regulations to implement the law. This presentation will review lessons learned and provide strategies for navigating the technical and legal requirements of the regulatory process, including recommendations for drafting regulatory language to accurately define training requirements (e.g., practica, documentation of clinical training and supervision, internship) and suggestions for responding to public comments on proposed rules.

(5) Role of Students in Advocating to Update Licensure Requirements

The American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) has long been a strong advocate of the recommendations of the APA Commission on Education and Training Leading to Licensure in Psychology and has actively supported the efforts of students and ECPs to advocate for licensure at the completion of the doctorate. Students and ECPs today are well prepared, sophisticated and ready to advocate for this change as a result of the successful efforts of APAGS to train student affiliates to engage in policy and legislative advocacy early in their professional development. Because today's graduate students will be the ones to most directly benefit from updating statutory and regulatory requirements, it is vital for any advocacy effort related to changing licensure eligibility to incorporate the advocacy efforts of students. In particular, the APAGS Advocacy Coordinating Team has developed a network of over 350 individuals to organize grassroots advocacy efforts on a variety of legislative issues and is ready to engage members in efforts to change licensure requirements. Recommendations for SPTA inclusion and collaboration with students will be discussed.